

we look for stranger things 'cause that's just who we are by absitinvidia

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Summary:

Steve reflects on how they got here, all because he missed her so much, and found something else he never knew he needed.

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Author's Note:

Hello!

This is a small one-shot (2300 words) for Stranger Things as you can see from my tags. I usually write longer one-shots but I've never written Stranger Things fic before so just want to see how this goes! I'm interested in the show and the characters so I thought I'd pull something together. I love Steve and the potential dynamics there for Nancy and Jonathan. I have a few more ideas for this show in terms of writing so I may explore that.

I really hope you enjoy my take on this and I'd love to get your feedback in terms of kudos and comments, it would definitely motivate me for any future fic and this being my first Stranger Things focused piece of writing it would be great to know if people enjoyed it.

Please see tags for warnings. In this, I'm not explicitly stating their ages but I'm imagining them all as 18 so the age of consent in America. Sex isn't explicit in this but it is referenced and alluded to.

Thank you!

*we turned our back
that's ordinary from the start
we look for stranger things
'cause that's just who we are
found me the edges something beautiful than love
show me the sky falling down*

“Stranger Things” - Kygo

Steve knows it's polite to share but he can't say he's always been a fan of doing so.

He hates loaning his jackets to his boys, his hairspray to his Mom, he even hates sharing basketball tips with the team because there's something satisfying about taking all the glory. Yet, with *her*, and with *him*?

Steve Harrington likes to share.

Perhaps it's because she's softer now than when it was just them two, perhaps it's because *he* brings out something in her that's gentle and vulnerable, but still powerful. Sometimes when *he's* half asleep, falling into a dream, shuddering awake like he's falling and about to hit the ground and splinter into little fragments Steve realises how he makes Steve feel: desperate to keep him safe, to hold him tight. He makes her gentle and he makes Steve gentle, too.

Steve isn't ashamed.

It shouldn't work. It's 1983 and despite his parent's fond eye rolling over “the new generation” with their big hair (like his Mom didn't rock a beehive back in the sexual revolution) Steve knows if they knew it wasn't just her lips (cherry, wet, pink) that he knows but it's his lips (mint, soft, firm) as well expensive china would clatter to the kitchen floor followed by screams and hot, desperate tears.

It works, though.

Steve knew it was over and he wasn't angry, just empty but the sort of empty that fills your veins with fury interspersed with patches of numbness. It was himself he was mad at, for not seeing the things he wished he had seen, even though *he* assured Steve that he couldn't have known, not when she never told Steve the truth.

Steve craved her for months after their bittersweet goodbye. He knew

she was with him; listening to crackling old records and sipping cola in his room and if it wasn't for Dustin, the curly haired little rascal he can't seem to shake these days, Steve doesn't know if the current situation would have ever really began.

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"Steve!" Dustin had gasped, running after him down a school corridor, one bright Tuesday afternoon, "hey, man, wanna go for a milkshake?"

Dustin grinned at him, that toothy adorable smile that made Steve bite back his own smile.

"Alright, kid," he shrugged, nonchalant despite the fact he had actually been looking for Dustin all day seeing as days had passed without their regular good-naturedly mocking of each other and friendly chit-chat, "milkshake it is. You can pay."

"No way!" Dustin protested, grabbing his bike as they strode into the fresh air of the schools grounds, Steve groaning as he realised the bike was filthy and would be unceremoniously shoved on his back seats, "you're rich, and you're the adult here."

"Hmm," Steve had replied, knowing he'd lost but not giving Dustin the satisfaction of agreeing with him just yet, "just get in, idiot, let's go get our sugar rush."

Dustin chattered the entire way about the AV's latest project and his spiteful Geography teacher and he spoke with a sadness about Max and Lucas, Steve eyeing him carefully, before they parked up at the diner. Dustin's mood immediately changing as he realised he was about to get his treat. Steve strutted in, enjoying the way girls coo over him and what they assume is his sweet little brother, enjoying the moment when Dustin elbowed him as they stood at the counter and chose their drinks.

"See, dude, I'm a total chick magnet," Dustin had winked, Steve suppressing a laugh.

Steve paid and Dustin had the good sense to not gloat about him

losing the 'you pay, no you pay' stand-off (as always), for now.

It was as they approached a small, slightly dirty (empty drink cartons, unfinished packets of sugar flung across) table that Steve caught them. Her back was to Steve, tiny frame being hugged by a pink jacket, and he was grinning shyly at his hands. Steve saw him reach out, slowly, for her hand, saw her allow it, until they were tangled together.

He looked so happy and Steve couldn't bring himself to be mad about it.

"Oh, shit," Dustin had whispered, clocking Steve's wistful stare, "dude, if you wanna go..."

"What?" Steve laughed, "no way, kid, it's fine, alright?"

Dustin shrugged, going back to his creamy shake before asking Steve's advice on his latest crush. Steve listened, he answered, but he couldn't ignore his true focus: on her shiny pink jacket, his gentle, firm hand on hers.

"...dragons, and I flew into the sunset," Dustin ended, sincere.

"Cool, sounds good," Steve muttered, sipping his drink, trying not to look at them.

"Steve, I just told you I rode a dragon into the sunset," Dustin complained, looking like a furious pug dog, little face squished up underneath his hat.

"With the crazy shit you kids pull, that isn't that far-fetched," Steve bitched, risking a glance back when - *fuck!* - his eyes met Steve's, an apology on his lips, shock too, perhaps, Steve wasn't sure. Steve mustered the unfriendliest of smiles.

"I can bike home from here," Dustin said pointedly, wiser than Steve gives him credit for sometimes, "you should speak to them. To her."

Steve wanted to argue on principle but he found himself agreeing with a shrug, sending Dustin on his way with clear instructions to be careful on the roads. It should have been awkward, and it was, Steve

hovering over beside their table, thumbs in his belt loops.

“Hey,” *Jonathan* said, earnest and pleasant, “hey, Steve.”

It made her – *Nancy* – sit up sharpish like she’d been softly electrocuted, looking up at Steve with the eyes he could never resist, doe and beautiful.

“Hi,” she smiled, not quite sure.

Steve wanted to tell her he isn’t sure either.

Instead he sat, let them lead, small talk passing by and Steve tried not to stare at slim, firm thighs under the table. If it were like it was, he’d stroke her left thigh, ease himself round. If it were like it was, she’d gasp in horror but bite back a laugh, squealing quietly, horrified, but letting him tease, before it got too much and they’d chase each other back to the car, Steve driving wildly until they parked up off a lonely freeway and fell into each other on the back seats.

It’s not like it was.

Steve tapped his fingers on the table, watching the unspoken words that were clear on their faces. Jonathan adores her and she trusts Jonathan in a way she never trusted him. Steve could see it, he could feel it, the way she tilted her head and smiled at Jonathan as he stole the last of her milkshake, before looking at Steve apologetically, perhaps aware of the dull jealousy, Steve quiet.

“Hey, um,” Jonathan began, awkward as always, “do you want to come back with us? Mom’s with Hopper, Will’s with Mike, so it’s a free house,” he shrugs. Steve couldn’t read his face, he could only feel the pull towards the two of them, the desire to agree, so he did. Nancy was stiff beside him as he nodded but Steve felt something in the air that he only feels with her, a magnetic pull, combined with a need to see her pretty face and know she’s close enough to touch.

He drove fast – faster than *him* – arriving at the Byers’s house before they did, finding a crackling radio station to listen to as he waited, nerves tangled in his gut for reasons unknown.

Jonathan pulled up slowly. Nancy stared out the window, blue eyes

fixed on Steve's. Steve felt the nerves tighten, exiting the car and impatient as Jonathan fussed about with his keys before finally allowing everyone inside, flicking on light switches, the heater.

Steve took the beer he was offered, comfortable on the sofa as Jonathan made himself busy finding cassettes and a player.

Nancy's hand were curled around her beer and she glanced over at him with the soft licks of her lips by that small, pretty pink tongue which was torturous to Steve. He needed her. He wanted to feel her, small and vulnerable in his arms, yet she'd always surprise him with her strength and it was hot, oh, *god*, it was hot when she straddled him, his wrists pinned down as she pressed back on his dick and teased, patient, as Steve began to unravel and beg.

His daydream shifted as Jonathan reappeared, the daydream going from shock to terror as he began to imagine the same scenario but Jonathan and Nancy; her thighs gripped around Jonathan's hips while Jonathan explored her waist with his hands, moving upwards. Steve could see it so clearly, the way Jonathan would stare up at her in adoration, unbelieving that he gets to have her like this, but when Nancy leans down to kiss him it's Steve. It's him. He's the one straddled across this strange boy, this quiet kid he's always hated, and it's him – *Steve Harrington* – leaning down, lips ghosting over Jonathan's until they're not, until it's warm skin and wet tongue and Jonathan's hands are digging into Steve's hips.

Steve was brought back to reality with that, jumping up and running to the sink as he spat out his beer.

"Shit, sorry," Jonathan mumbled, still stood in the middle of the living room, "we have other beer if you like?"

"What the fuck is this laced with?!" Steve demanded to know, heart thumping wildly, "I had a creepy – weird – thing!"

"What, Steve?" Nancy asked, looking at him perplexed, still sipping on her own beer.

"I had, like, a vision – a daydream," Steve spluttered, "more of a nightmare, actually."

Jonathan looked unsure, looking to Nancy to resolve the issue of her slightly deranged and rude ex-boyfriend, which Nancy rolled her eyes at, clearly the two of them having a private, silent conversation as Steve stood, hands on hips, annoyed.

“Did you lace this shit, Byers?” Steve asked again, forcing Jonathan to smirk.

“Lace your beer?” Jonathan repeated, incredulous, “no, man. I took the beer out the same time I took ours out. You saw me. Are you sure you’re ok?”

Steve could see the worry in his eyes, Jonathan starting to look around the house in uncertainty, worried the upside side down was bleeding back into their lives again, threatening the relatively normalcy that had formed after the mind flayer’s defeat.

“Fuck,” Steve sighed, embarrassed, “it’s fine, whatever.”

He had sauntered back into the living room, attempting to process the images floating around his mind as Nancy and Jonathan played some songs, chattered happily, Steve for once in his life the third wheel, the guy less desirable than the other guy in the room. He’d always been so afraid of that - so desperate to be attainable, inspirational, adored - yet now it was happening and all he felt was free. He didn’t feel ashamed or humiliated. He missed Nancy, how he missed her, but he wasn’t crushed by her love of Jonathan.

He must have been smiling to himself, Nancy’s voice interjecting.

“What’s the joke?” she asked sweetly. Steve shrugged, laughing at himself.

Jonathan looked at him knowingly.

It was a few more beers in, if Steve recalls correctly. It was *Jonathan*, too. Steve will always be in awe of that. Jonathan was the one who initiated it, lips on Nancy, far too intimate for it to be a quick kiss despite an audience. It was intended. Steve knew they planned it because they discussed it afterwards in their teenage post-coital happy haze, how Nancy and Jonathan had planned for months to

find Steve again, to make him theirs.

It felt so much more than it had ever felt before. Steve had always loved sex with Nancy, loved the intensity of it but beyond the circle-jerks with his moronic basketball friends he'd never gone with a guy, not until Jonathan. A threesome was a fantasy he and the guys would laugh about, always two women of course, but that first time between the three of them? It wasn't a sordid affair, not the way he'd laugh about it with David and Terry in the post-game showers. It was a connection of three people who understood each other and accepted each other, who needed something from each other, all of them.

*

It's been three months and Steve is more content than he's ever been.

Nancy's back, she's back, and he gets to have her, gets to play with her soft curls, be on the receiving end of her teasing jokes and recipient of her invaluable advice on college, work.

Jonathan, he's soft, too, in a way, but he's also grounding, he's safe. Steve lost all sense of toxic masculine pride the night they were together on that sofa, the way Jonathan grabbed his shirt and pulled him in and kissed him like he truly meant it, like he needed it the way Steve needed Nancy.

He's sure that in time they'll face obstacles, the same ones he and Nancy faced, or maybe different entirely. He knows it's not conventional and he knows it's a secret, if they were caught in a basement of a party, *lips on lips on lips*, parents would protest and kids would attack.

This is just for them.

Sometimes, Steve flirts with the idea of telling the one person he doesn't think is judgemental, who, despite great difference in age, size and fashion sense, is perhaps the only person he trusts.

He doesn't, though, not yet. He keeps *her*, familiar and beautiful, and *him*, new and addictive, all for himself.

